



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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EAST COUNTY MICE CONFIRMED POSITIVE FOR HANTAVIRUS *County Vector Control Tests Wild Mice In Area of First Locally-Acquired Human Case*

On the heels of a report of San Diego County's first locally acquired human case of hantavirus, County Vector Control reports positive tests on wild mice trapped in the Campo area. "These findings are not surprising as 5 - 10% of the local wild mouse population tests positive for hantavirus annually. We have isolated hantavirus in wild mice in four of the past five years," said Gary Erbeck, Director, Department of Environmental Health.

Last week the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency reported that a 32-year-old East County woman was suffering from hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS). She has since recovered. HPS is a rare illness that can be fatal and has been diagnosed in many parts of the country, including California.

A virus carried by wild rodents, primarily deer mice, causes HPS. The first signs of illness are similar to flu symptoms and include fatigue, fever and muscle aches; they may also include headache, dizziness, chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain. Later symptoms of HPS include coughing, shortness of breath rapidly progressing to severe difficulty in breathing, and sometimes death.

While there is no specific treatment for hantavirus, there are several precautions that may be taken to avoid exposure to the virus. Avoid rodent infested areas and minimize stirring up dust or material that may be contaminated with virus-laden particles. **DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM – USE WET CLEAN UP METHODS.**

- Ventilate the affected area by opening doors and windows for several hours.
- Use rubber gloves. Spray a 10 % bleach solution (2 tablespoons bleach to 1 cup of water) onto dead rodents, rodent droppings, nests, contaminated traps and surrounding areas and let the disinfectant stand for at least 15 minutes before cleaning. Clean with a sponge or a mop – **do not sweep or vacuum.**
- Place disinfected rodents and debris into two plastic bags, seal them and discard in the trash.
- Wash gloves in a bleach solution, then soap and water, and dispose of them using the same double-bag method. Thoroughly wash your bare hands with soap and water.

For more information please contact the Department of Environmental Health at (858) 694-2888 or visit www.sdcdeh.org.

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